

TESTIMONY OF Kal Patel, Meadowbrook Manor, Administrator
IN OPPOSITION TO
Section 14 of HB 6846- AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS.

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and members of the Human Services Committee, my name is Kal Patel. I am a board member of the CT Association of Residential Care Home and Administrator of Meadowbrook and Essex Village Manor in Essex Ct. I am here to testify **in opposition to Section 14 of House Bill 6846** which would prohibit residential care homes from receiving fair rent and cap residential care home rates.

This bill would jeopardize the ability for many homes to continue to operate and burden an already underpaid industry where owners are forced to spend money using a credit card or taking out loans for operating costs. We provide residence with 24 hour staff supervision, medication supervision, housekeeping, breakfast, lunch, dinner, recreation, and physical plant maintenance for approximately \$2750 per month. The sad truth here is that the amount it costs to care for our residents (utilities, employment cost, food, property upkeep and insurance) have gone up over the past few years but my rate has remained almost the same \$2750. The vast majority of our employees who make a modest working wage had to accept a pay freeze. I've had to increase their health insurance contributions and drop family coverage. Additionally we've had to delay improvements and maintenance to the facility. We serve 56 residents of which a vast majority has mental health issues. We are the first "line of defense" to help prevent some of these residents from unnecessary visits to emergency care at much greater cost for the state and society.

After years of being flat funded or seeing small increases residential care homes face a critical breaking point. A vast majority of our cost are critical. Food, electricity, heating oil and insurance cost can't be negotiated lower and must be provided. Over the past few years these cost have risen exponentially yet our rates have been frozen and continued to be threatened through proposals like Section 14 of House Bill 6846.

We ask that you please uncap residential care home rates and not move forward with the proposed language in Section 14 of House Bill 6846. Many homes are already at a breaking point. Increased costs in gas, insurance and food expenses accompanied by capped rates have made operating homes very difficult. Without these homes serving this vulnerable population, the state would be spending significantly more dollars providing care for these individuals. Residential care homes are critical to many of these people who often live in the home for 20 years or more.

I thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony

Respectfully Submitted
Kal Patel Meadowbrook Manor /Essex Village Manor